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EDITORIAL

THE LIVING FACTS.

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BOOKS without end could be spun out upon the theory concerning the inevitableness of class rule under capitalism, together with the conclusion that Congress constitutes a “class government,” and that the laws, which our so-called “National Legislature” grinds out and considers, are no more “national” than the raw beefsteaks, which Roosevelt devours, settle down into the “national” stomach. But theories are symptoms of unripe times. Ripe times are so fertile in living facts that theories need engage little if any thought. The living facts are so luscious and numerous that they bring the theory with them. In a way they are “food for mind and body.” Such are the ripened times in which this generation lives. The living facts tumble down from the trees in such quantities that it is almost impossible to gather them all in. One of these was the living fact that tumbled down from the tree during the debate in the House of Representatives on the railroad rate bill.

The railroad companies have organized themselves into a tableau of persecuted innocence. Wicked people are harassing them. For why? Out of pure wickedness. The railroads are charged with making too much money; aye, with plundering the public. The fact is that it is hard to tell a railroad board of directors from any avowed charitable institution. They prove it too. “By making comparison between the charges of a few years ago and those of to-day it will be found that what is called the ‘average ton-mile rate’ has gradually been reduced”!! The anti-railroad interests in the House did not allow themselves to be taken in. One of the Representatives, in particular, looked into the figures. What he found was that freight is divided into various classes, such as first, third, fourth, etc. In class 1, high-grade articles, paying a high grade of freight, such as silks, are placed; in the sixth, or some lower grade, is coal, which pays a lower rate. It follows that if the amount of freight in the

sixth class increases, while the amount in the first class remains the same, it would appear as if the average ton-mile rate had been reduced; it also follows that if the amount of freight in the first class is increased out of proportion to the sixth class, it would appear, despite the increase in the average ton-mile rate, that the specific rates remain the same. Finally, the investigation showed, first, that the low-grade freights have increased materially; secondly, that more than 600 articles have been changed from a lower classification to a higher, thereby imposing a higher freight rate upon those articles, and yet the increase in lower-grade freight had been so enormous that the average ton rate did not increase in proportion to the actual increase in rates. In short, the railroads had so juggled with “averages” that, although their rates had actually increased it appeared as if the rates had declined. To put it in still shorter terms—the railroads told a partial truth, thereby uttering a robustious lie.—Against that jugglery the House cried: “Shame!” “Fraud!”

Now look at this other picture. These identical railroads, following a very common practice among capitalists, are in the habit of “raising the wages” of one craft in their employ at the expense of the wages of some other craft, and thus, despite the reduction that most of their employes have to suffer, make it appear that the average wages which they pay have not declined. To illustrate: Suppose a Company has 1,000 men working and paying them \$2,000 a day. The average wages would be \$2. Now suppose the Company takes 200 of these 1,000 men, raises their wages to \$4 a day, and lowers the wages of the remaining 800 men to \$1.50. The result would be that the condition of the large majority will have declined, and yet the average will have suffered no change whatever; it will have remained \$2. Below the surface of identical “averages” a condition of actual decline in well-being would lie concealed.

Against this particular jugglery the “National Legislature” had not a word to say. Why? Because the jugglery cut into the flesh of the Working Class. Against the jugglery of the “average ton-mile rate” the “National Legislature” grew hot in the collar. Why? Because that jugglery cut into the flesh of the Capitalist Class, the shippers—a luscious living fact that furnishes at once an instance and the proof of CLASS RULE.

To the dogs with theories! The living facts are richer, by far. “The man who

theorizes,” runs the warning of the lyric sage, “is like a beast upon a barren heath, surrounded round about with rich green meadows.”

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